

## Message Text

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71

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 NIC-01 DRC-01 /103 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8097

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 8378

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ROUNDUP

1. APRIL 4 SAW FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF CANDIDACY FOR THE PRESIDENCY BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND UDR STALWART JACAUES CHABAN-DELMAS, AND BY ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AND FOURTH REPUBLIC PRIME MINISTER EDGAR FAURE. CHABAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT INCLUDED MENTION OF HIS THREE YEARS AS PRIME MINISTER UNDER POMPIDOU. CHABAN SAID: "I COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE POLITICAL FORMATIONS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY BEGINNING WITH THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE UDR." OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT WAS COMMUNIST PARTY (PC) ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT A COMMON CANDIDATE OF THE LEFT FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF GHE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

2. COMMENT. WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHABAN'S AND FAURE'S CANDIDACIES, THE OPENING GUNS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HAVE SOUNDED, EVEN BEFORE THE APRIL 6 NATIONAL DAY  
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OF MOURNING FOR POMPIDOU. DECLARED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDA-

TES INCLUDE CHABAN-DELMAS, EDGAR FAURE, JEAN-MARIE LE PEN (EXTREME RIGHT-WINGER), CHRISTIAN FOUCHET (GAULLIST STALWART AND FORMER MINISTER WHO BROKE WITH UDR IN 1971) AND ARLETTE LARGUILLER (EXTREME LEFT, TROTSKYIST). FAURE'S RATHER SURPRISING DECISION TO RUN, IF MAINTAINED, COULD WEAKEN UDR SUPPORT FOR CHABAN. A KEY QUESTION -- SOON TO BE ANSWERED -- IS WHETHER FINANCE MINISTER GISCARD D'ESTAING WILL DECIDE TO RUN.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF PC CENTRAL COMMITTEE, IF FIRMLY HELD AS NOW SEEMS LIKELY, WILL RESULT IN SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) FIRST SECRETARY MITTERRAND BEING SOLE CANDIDATE OF THE THREE PARTIES FORMING THE UNITED LEFT (PC, PS AND LEFT RADICALS). COMMUNIST DECISION NOT TO PRESENT CANDIDATE IS BASED PROBABLY ON FEAR THAT THEIR MOST SUITABLE CANDIDATE, FIRST SECRETARY GEORGES MARCHAIS -- NOT A POPULAR VOTE-GETTER -- WOULD RUN BEHIND MITTERRAND IN THE FIRST ROUND, THUS DEMONSTRATING THAT PC IS NO LONGER LARGEST SINGLE LEFT FRENCH PARTY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE EFFECT ON MITTERRANDS CANDIDACY OF COMMUNIST RELUCTANCE TO RUN A SEPARATE FIRST-ROUND CANDIDATE. SOME VOTERS WILL NOTE LINK BETWEEN PS AND PC, AND RESIDUAL ANTI-COMMUNIST FEAR COULD WORK AGAINST MITTERRAND. ON THE OTHER HAND, MITTERRAND WILL BENEFIT FROM THE REMARKABLE ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS OF PC. NET BALANCE WILL PROBABLY ONLY BE TO SLIGHT DISADVANTAGE OF MITTERRAND IN FIRST ROUND.  
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